

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01802 011015Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03 IO-13 COME-00
TRSE-00 ACDA-12 HA-05 /093 W
-----074791 011023Z /16

O R 010920Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7398
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1802

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION APRIL 1, 1200 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 1788 (DTG 311405Z MAR 78)

1. SUMMARY. THE CEASE-FIRE CONTINUED TO HOLD GENERALLY.
ARAFAT REPORTEDLY TOLD HOSS THE PLO WOULD COOPERATE WITH THE
GOL IN ACHIEVING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. ACCORDING TO ONE BEIRUT
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01802 011015Z

NEWSPAPER, THE ADF COMMANDER SAID NO MORE MILITARY SUPPLIES
WERE REACHING THE PALESTINIANS IN SOUTH LEBANON. A FRENCH
SHIP ARRIVED IN BEIRUT WITH THE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT FOR THE FRENCH
UNIFIL CONTINGENT. GOVERNOR OF SOUTH LEBANON SAID THAT THERE
WAS A SHORTAGE OF ELECTRICAL POWER AND DRINKABLE WATER IN TYRE.
END SUMMARY.

2. MILITARY SITUATION. THE CEASE-FIRE CONTINUES TO HOLD GENERALLY FOR THE THIRD DAY SINCE YASSIR ARAFAT DECLARED THE PLO WOULD FACILITATE UNIFIL'S MISSION. PALESTINIANS STILL CONTROL THE QASIMIYAH BRIDGE NORTH OF TYRE. FRENCH TROOPS IN THE WESTERN SECTOR HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO LINK UP WITH THE IRANIANS IN THE CENTRAL SECTOR. FRENCH CONTROL OF THE QASIMIYAH BRIDGE AND THE LINK-UP ARE CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL BY UNIFIL HERE IF DEPLOYMENT OF UN TROOPS IS TO BE CARRIED OUT SUCCESSFULLY.

3. ARAFAT MEETS WITH HOSS.

A. PLO CHIEF YASSIR ARAFAT CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS ON MARCH 31 TO DISCUSS SOUTH LEBANON. AFTER THE MEETING, HOSS TOLD REPORTERS THAT ARAFAT "ONCE MORE ASSURED ME OF THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE'S DESIRE TO COOPERATE WITH THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES TOWARD ACHIEVING AN EARLY ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, WHICH IS OUR COMMON GOAL."

B. IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED MARCH 31 IN THE FRENCH COMMUNIST DAILY HUMANITE, ARAFAT SAID: "AS FAR AS THE FRENCH TROOPS ARE CONCERNED, WE WILL TREAT THEM THE SAME WAY AS THE OTHER UN CONTINGENTS AS LONG AS THEY PURSUE THE AIMS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THEY DO NOT INTERFERE IN THE ACTION AND PRESENCE IN LEBANON OR OUR MILITARY FORCES." ARAFAT ALSO STATED THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE PALESTINIANS IN SOUTH LEBANON WAS BASED

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01802 011015Z

ON THE CAIRO AND RIYADH AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES AND THE PALESTINIANS. (THE PALESTINIANS HAVE EXPRESSED FEAR THAT UNSC RESOLUTION 425, WHICH CALLS FOR RESTORING LEBANESE AUTHORITY TO SOUTH LEBANON, MAY BE USED AS A DEVICE FOR ANNULING THEIR RIGHT TO HAVE A PRESENCE IN SOUTH LEBANON UNDER THE CAIRO AND RIYADH ACCORDS.)

4. ADF BAN ON OUTSIDE AID TO PALESTINIANS.

A. THE COMMANDER OF THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCES (ADF), LT. COL. SAMI KHATIB, SAID MARCH 31 THAT NO MORE MILITARY SUPPLIES WERE REACHING THE PALESTINIANS IN SOUTH LEBANON, ACCORDING TO IKE. KHATIB MADE THE STATEMENT AFTER A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ELIAS SARKIS, PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS, AND FOREIGN MINISTER FUAD BOUTROS. "I CAN BE QUITE DEFINITE ON THE MATTER," KHATIB SAID. (KHATIB AND SPEAKER KAMAL ASSAD VISITED DAMASCUS ON MARCH 31.)

B. FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS TOLD REPORTERS THAT "NONE OF THE OBSTACLES FACING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 425 ARE

INSUPERABLE. THEY WILL BE ELIMINATED, GOD WILLING."

5. UNIFIL ACTIVITIES. ON MARCH 31 THE FRENCH SHIP, LEON-ROUX, ARRIVED AT BEIRUT PORT WITH 55 VEHICLES OF VARIOUS TYPES AND OTHER EQUIPMENT FOR THE FRENCH UNIFIL CONTINGENT. IN ADDITION, THE BULK OF THE NORWEGIAN CONTINGENT IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN ARRIVING IN LEBANON ON APRIL 1 (AS OF MARCH 31, THERE WERE ONLY 59 NORWEGIANS IN COUNTRY). THERE ARE NOW A TOTAL OF ABOUT 1,100 UNIFIL SOLDIERS IN LEBANON OUT OF A PROJECTED FORCE OF 4,000.

6. VIEWS OF GOVERNOR OF SOUTH. GOVERNOR OF SOUTH LEBANON, HALIM FAYYAD, TOLD EMBOFF ON MARCH 30 THAT
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PAGE 04 BEIRUT 01802 011015Z

PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS AFFLICTING SOUTH WERE: 1) LACK OF ELECTRICAL POWER AND POTABLE WATER IN TYRE OWING TO SHELLING DAMAGE AND DIFFICULTY OF BRINGING IN REPAIR CREWS AND EQUIPMENT; 2) PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN SIDON OCCUPYING APARTMENTS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITH NO PRESENT PROSPECT OF MOVING THEM TO OTHER FACILITIES OUTSIDE CITY. ON LATTER POINT, LEBANESE COULD NOT AGREE AMONG THEMSELVES ON LANDS TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO PALESTINIANS FOR FEAR OF INSTITUTIONALIZING PALESTINIAN PRESENCE AROUND CITY. FAYYAD WAS NOT CONVINCED PALESTINIANS WOULD BE WILLING TRADE PRESENT QUARTERS FOR TENTS, EVEN IF CAMPS COULD BE CREATED. PARKER

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